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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000722

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TREASURY FOR OFFICE OF AFRICAN NATIONS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#) [SOCI](#) [KDEM](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER CLEARS ONE HURDLE: APPOINTS NEW
GOVERNORS AND PREFECTS

REF: CONAKRY 710

Classified By: Political Officer Jessica Davis Ba. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) Summary. On June 22, by presidential decree, Guinea named eight new governors and 33 prefects to lead its administrative regions. The nominations conclude months of wrangling (reftel) resulting in an eventual compromise between Prime Minister Kouyate and President Conte. Initial public reaction has been muted with the majority of the population seemingly content to give these new administrators the opportunity to work. Keeping with population demands, all positions have been replaced, although many were already serving within the Ministry of Interior and Security. While many of our interlocutors claim the administrators have close ties to Conte by virtue of their ascendance from within the system, the list is relatively ethnically balanced, has fewer military representatives, and includes women for the first time in Guinea's history. With state administrators deployed within the interior, the government can finally begin the work necessary to deliver on its promises announced when first coming to office. End Summary.

New Governors for Guinea's Eight Regions

12. (U) The new governors of Guinea's eight administrative regions follow:

-- Malick Sankhon, Governor of Conakry, formerly General Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Hotels

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-- Hawa Fofana, Governor of Kindia, Formerly Professor at the University of Sonfonia (and the first woman governor of Guinea)
-- Siafa Beavogui, Governor of Boke, formerly Director of Cabinet in the Kankan Governor's Office.
-- Mamadou Salio Bah, Governor of Mamou, formerly Professor at the University of Conakry
-- Ibrahima Blacki Bangoura, Governor of Faranah, formerly Director General within the Ministry of Interior and Security
-- Ibrahima Sory Diabate, Governor of Labe, formerly Political Counselor in the Ministry of Interior and Security
-- Rene Bayo Kamano, Governor of Kankan, formerly Counselor in the Ministry of Interior and Security.
-- Oumar Traore, Governor of N'Zerekore, formerly Counselor in the Ministry of Interior and Security

13. (C) The Mission enjoys good relations with the majority of the newly appointed governors. We have worked very closely with Diabate over the last two years on improving

democratic processes and preparation for local and legislative elections. The Embassy sponsored Kamano on a visit to N'Djamena for the International Conference Against Terrorism and was in close contact with him about border issues including trafficking in persons and on the status of the Yenga area. Bangoura has been extremely supportive of Mission initiatives in the interior, recently advocating for the national implementation of a USAID-funded project on grassroots democracy that led to collective decisions to stop female genital cutting. Poloff met with Beavogui on a recent trip to Kankan. He was extremely vocal about the need for change, competent leadership, and the fact that Conakry had forgotten about its responsibilities to its people outside the capital.

Balanced Roster, But Loyal to Whom?

¶4. (C) The new governors represent all four major ethnic groups (2 Soussou, 2 Malinke, 2 Peulh, 2 Forest Region). Conte has appointed Guinea's first female governor for the Region of Kindia. With the replacement of the military governors in Kankan and N'Zerekore, all governors are now civilians. While two professors have been named, the overwhelming majority of the administrators come from various positions within the Ministry of Interior and Security and are known to have strong affiliations to Conte himself or with the majority PUP political apparatus. Many of our interlocutors have indicated that while their administrative skills and management experience vary, the new governors will abide by the directions they receive from Conakry. However, they believed that if the mission handed down from the Minister of Interior and Security differed with one given by Conte, the governors would choose Conte's directives. While they have not been vocal, key political and social actors

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have expressed concern about the newly appointed leader's neutrality and loyalty.

New "Old Guard" Within Guinea's Prefectures

¶5. (SBU) Like its governors, many of Guinea's 33 new prefects are familiar faces. Most were formerly serving in the number two or three position in various prefectures prior to their appointment. Only one prefect was retained -- Commander Bourema Conde, moved from Mandiana to N'Zerekore. Four military prefects will represent the border areas of Mandiana, N'Zerekore, Gueckedou, and Macenta. This is a slight reduction from the five former military prefects. In a historic move, Guinea also has three women prefects in Forecariah, Dabola, and Yomou. Although the list is relatively ethnically balanced, some counts indicate an over-representation of Malinke prefects. Our analysis also indicated that many of the individuals are close to Conte and are establishment "insiders". The decrees containing the full list of governors and prefects will be sent to the Department via email.

Cabinets Begin to Take Shape

¶6. (SBU) One of Prime Minister Kouyate's major challenges is that his ministers have been operating without a staff that reflects the new government structure or their choice for collaborators. The Treasury Representative reports that the Ministry of Finance has finally begun naming the administrative directors that serve within each of the ministries. These Finance Ministry officers have overall budgetary, management, personnel, and administrative responsibilities, serving within each of the government ministries. At least half of the new administrators are

women. The Minister of Finance, after posting their nominations, told the Treasury Representative that he would make it clear that he has supervisory authority over these officers and they will no longer enjoy the latitude with which others may have formerly operated. These tighter controls are part of the financial reforms promised by the Prime Minister. Thus far, this is the first example of government restructuring that has occurred.

Appointments Calm a Restless Nation

17. (C) COMMENT. The June 22 announcement of new governors and prefects for Guinea's eight administrative regions represents a major milestone for Prime Minister Kouyate's government. The "consensus" government has been under increasing pressure to show concrete results (reftel). Since taking office March 28, the Prime Minister required an extended period of time to name the members of his cabinet and appoint the administrators who represent the state in the interior. Conte and his coterie blocked this process at each turn as successive lists were submitted, then summarily rejected. The final lists are a result of deep compromise with a Head of State who is unwilling to cede true power, shrewdly installing individuals from inside the system, who are likely to remain faithful to the establishment. Most of our contacts agreed that with Conte still in power, in the best case scenario, the appointees would maintain the status quo in order to preserve their personal interests. Yet for the moment, Guinea's population is breathing a collective sigh of relief and is content to give the administrators time to deliver. End Comment.
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